The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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The reasoning of the strongest is always the best.—La Fontaine.

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LABOR POWER IS LIFE; IT CAN'T BE MONOPOLIZED

A secret executive committee of a self-styled Citizens' Committee in Cleveland is circulating an "exposé of the labor monopoly" in the building industry of that city.

The Citizens' Committee favors the anti-union shop—it wants individual bargaining and to pit one job seeker against another. The list is also favored by every thug, rat rigger, real estate promoter, building material profiteer, rent racker and others who consider 300 or 400 per cent a "fair" return on their investment.

These extortioners can not step outside their own lives. Their psychology is "sell" and "profit it." They talk of "buying labor," as though it were a thing to be hawked in the market place. "Monopoly" is their elemental instinct.

Those who talk of a "labor monopoly" cling to the serf ideal they have dressed up with catch phrases, like the "open" shop and the "American plan." They can't conceive of a doctrine so darling as freedom for workers. Therein lies their opposition to trade unionism.

The power to labor can not be separated from life. To labor is not an automatic process—one must have memory, understanding and will.

These faculties are only inherent in man. Thus labor power—life itself—differs from a lumber mill, a steam shovel, an electric crane, a bag of cement or other commodities.

Man owns his labor power because he owns himself. It can not be separated from him. He may discuss work conditions with an employer, but if he is denied the last word, or if he accepts employment under duress, he is not a free man.

To approximate the Declaration of Independence he must be permitted to withhold his labor power or to associate with others to labor under conditions satisfactory to them.

A man can monopolize a commodity, but not life. When he talks of a "labor monopoly," he acknowledges he retains the serf ideal.

The difference between the free man and the serf is that the free man can labor or refuse to labor, as suits his will.

Fine spun legalisms and the sophistries of profit-seekers can not dilute this American fundamental.

TEXTILE STRIKERS SCORE FOURTH WIN

Passaic, N. J., Dec. 25.—Following a settlement with the Botany Worsted Mills, textile strikers scored their fourth victory by securing a settlement with the Dundee Textile Company. The Passaic Worsted Spinning Company was the first to sign, on November 11. Botany Worsted and its subsidiary, Garfield Worsted, followed on December 13.

The Dundee settlement is similar to the other adjustments—right of workers to organize, collective bargaining, arbitration and no discrimination.

The Botany mills, which include the Garfield Worsted and the Botany Worsted, employ 6,500 workers in normal times.

The Botany workers precipitated the strike last January when they refused to accept a 10-per cent wage reduction. The other mills took similar action.

Other mills that have not settled are the Forstmann & Huffman, the Gera, the United Piece Dye Works in Lodi and the New Jersey Worsted.

STEEL TRUST MELON FOR STOCKHOLDERS

New York, Dec. 25.—Wall street enjoyed one of its famous melon cuttings when steel trust officials announced a $200,000,000 Christmas gift to stockholders in the form of a 40 per cent stock dividend. The trust's strong box still holds $500,000,000 undivided profits.

The stock dividend means that $200,000,000 in profits are placed in capital account and the trust's capital is increased to that amount by increasing stock. Steel trust stock has a market value of $160 a share. If a person owns 100 shares he will receive 40 additional shares, and his $70 annual interest income per share will be $90.80.

Insiders hold large blocks of this stock that three years ago sold for as low as $85 a share. One hundred shares at that price ($85), together with the present dividend, now have a market value of $22,400.

The steel trust's policy is to pile up profits, plough them back into the business and issue stock in an equal amount to stockholders. During this pyramiding of profits wages and hours of employes are not changed until the trust is forced to act through fear of trade unionism or an aroused public opinion that the organized workers develop.

RED CONTROL OF UNION ENDS; CLOAKMAKERS SECURE GAINS

New York, Dec. 25.—An arbitration board has upheld 20,000 cloakmakers in their strike against the American Cloak and Suit Manufacturers' Association. Wage increases range from $3 to $9 per week. The 44-hour week is reduced to 42 hours the first two years of the three-year agreement and to 40 hours the last year.

The workers' case was presented by President Sigman and other officials of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union after they ousted Communists from control of the strike. President Sigman said the award is "a signal achievement for the cloakmakers and for sane trade union tactics." He declared that the union, through arbitration, has ended the "lockout and strike which the muddle-headed Communists were incapable of resolving after six months of costly struggle, and obtained through arbitration terms far more favorable than the Communists obtained from only one-fourth of the industry after 20 weeks of strife."

The award included a rebuke to the "reds," who led 35,000 men and women "into a long and costly strike involving considerable loss to the employer and great hardship to workers and their families."

The workers are hopeful the award will affect the strike of cloakmakers against the jobbers' association. With this settled, the long strike will be history.

MINERS ARE ROBBED WHEN UNORGANIZED

Pineville, Ky., December 25.—Robbed by company checkweighmen and paid a starvation wage, miners in this section of Kentucky declared for the United Mine Workers at a meeting here. A state law provides that miners may select a representative to observe the weighing of coal mined, but this is ignored by operators, who discharge or blacklist trade union advocates.

A feature of the gathering was the reception accorded the visitors by Pineville business men. These merchants displayed flags and banners to welcome the miners.

"Wage conditions are so bad among the miners it is impossible for them to give their children an education," Camie Wilson, county superintendent of schools, told the delegates. "These conditions hinge on the wage question. If this can be corrected, other matters will adjust themselves."

Will Hayes, clerk of the county educational board, told the miners their hope is in organization.

"Most of the newspapers of the state show a marked prejudice against union miners," he said. "You are living in the only method of fighting this prejudice. Organize and the coal operators will have to recognize you. You will win a living wage."

FAKE UNIONS SILENT AGAINST INJUSTICE

Cincinnati, Dec. 25.—"Company 'unions' do not appear before State Legislature or Congress to secure legislation beneficial to labor," writes John P. Frey, editor of International Molders' Journal.

"Nor do they oppose legislation favored by employing interests, which, if enacted, would prove injurious to labor. They do little, if anything, except what the employer wants them to do.

"The company 'union' is what its name implies, a 'union' controlled by the company—the employer. The plan of organization, its management, is devised by the employer. Control lies in his hands.

"The employes' membership in a company 'union' is obligatory. He can not hold his position if he refuses to be a member.

"The company 'union,' masking as an organization which enables the wage earners to protect their interests, can deceive no one except the uninformed and the stupid."

TEAPOT DOME STOCK BRINGS LOW FIGURE

New York, Dec. 25.—Wall street does not appear hopeful that the United States Supreme Court will reverse the ruling of a Federal Court of Appeals that the Teapot Dome oil lease was secured "by fraud and corruption" and should be cancelled.

Last week 113,248 shares of the Mammoth Oil Company were sold for 2¾ cents a share. At one time this stock had a market value of $50 a share.

When he secured the Teapot Dome lease Harry F. Sinclair organized the company to exploit this property.

STEEL TRUST WAS WRONG

The steel trust's division of $200,000,000 of its $700,000,000 profits among stockholders refutes the claim that the 12-hour day and the seven-day week is necessary.

As late as June, 1923, Judge Gary and associate directors of the American Iron and Steel Industries said the 12-hour day could not be abandoned until "there is a surplus of labor available." But the change was made without having "even a job."

The steel trust is a copper-riveted industrial autocrat. Each employe of this corporation must deal with it as an individual. It is honeycombed with spies and informers to acquaint its management with any unrest among workers, yet the men who direct this policy are not immune from the penetration of trade union agitation.

ITALIAN FAMILIES SPLIT BY MUSSOLINI

Washington, Dec. 25.—Discussion in the Senate on proposals to amend the immigration law, that separated families may be united, revealed that Italy refuses passports to families, but permits the father to come to America that he may send wages to Italy.

If those Italians secure American citizenship they are subject to military duty on return to their birthplace.

"It is the policy of the Italian government to send only the wage earner, and preferably the wage earner who leaves a family behind to bind him to his fatherland," said Senator Reed of Pennsylvania.

"Every man who has come to the United States in the last five and a half years came with his eyes wide open, knowing that this country has a quota law, and knowing that if he left his family abroad and came alone, his family might, and very likely would, be stopped by that quota law.

"It is unfair to tax America with the separation of families where the responsibility for that separation rests solely upon the emigrant himself and the country from which he emigrates. To say that we are separating those people from their weeping wives and children is a gross injustice."

INJUNCTION JUDGE CHECKED BY COURT

Charleston, W. Va., Dec. 25.—The State Supreme Court set aside a six-months' jail sentence that Judge Judge Lazzelle of Monongalia county court pronounced on Van A. Bittner, international representative of the United Mine Workers' Union. The unionist was charged with violating an injunction. The judge is accused by the West Virginia Federation of Labor with receiving coal royalties from coal operators to whom he has granted injunctions. The workers demand that he be impeached.

PEONAGE IN TEXAS

Brownsville, Texas, Dec. 25.—Peonage indictments against Sheriff Raymond Teller and 13 other Willacy county officials and private citizens have been returned by the federal grand jury.

The charges grow out of an investigation into alleged enforced labor during the cotton-picking season to guarantee return of railway fare paid these cotton pickers.

EMPLOYMENT SHARKS FLEECE OUT-OF-WORKS

Charleston, W. Va., Dec. 25.—Protection of workers' lives and opposition to employment sharks who fleece out-of-works feature the annual report of State Commissioner of Labor Jarrett. He made these recommendations:

Authorizing the commissioner of labor to adopt safety codes relating to machinery, boilers, elevators and any other device, place or equipment of a hazardous nature.

The passage of a law to broaden the activities of the employment service and additional agencies established in other industrial centers of the State, and also to give the bureau supervision over private employment agencies.

Limiting hours of work for women in factories, restaurants, mercantile establishments, mills and workshops.

Requiring first aid kits in factories.

Empower the commissioner of labor to inspect the scaffolding, temporary flooring and hoists of buildings two or more stories in height which are under construction.

PORTO RICAN PROBE GAINS NEW FRIEND

Washington, Dec. 25.—A bill to create a commission to "study, inspect and report upon the government and conditions in the island of Porto Rico," has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Felix Cordova Davila, resident commissioner of Porto Rico.

The A. F. of L. has repeatedly called for such action but received no aid from the commissioner. Conditions in the island are growing worse, and labor's position is gaining new adherents because of the people's widespread poverty and the policy of corporations to drain the island of its wealth.

Under the Jones organic act, passed by Congress, each corporation is limited to the ownership of 500 acres of land. This provision is ignored. Immense tracts have been seized by the sugar and tobacco trusts and the people are herded in towns and cities where they work for from 50 to 75 cents a day.

DEATHS INCREASE BY POOR HOUSING

New York, Dec. 25.—Poor housing is responsible for a high infant mortality in certain sections of this city, said Health Commissioner Harris.

"Let us not make the mistake of thinking that is housing problem," he said. "I pass many places on my official rounds that shock me. Although the infant mortality rate for the year was 65 a thousand persons in 1925, in some congested districts it was as high as 200 per thousand."

WELL PAID WORKERS ARE PROSPERITY BASE

Indianapolis, Dec. 25.—"The American workman is efficient when his wages make it worth while to be efficient," says Ellis Searcher, editor of the United Mine Workers' Journal, in discussing a statement by the New York Trust Company that the tremendous increase in business is due to high wages.

"Letting down the buying power of the miner—or any other class of labor—shuts off that much prosperity," the labor editor declares. Restricted prosperity is decreasing factory production and the corresponding use of coal. Thus the vicious circle is complete; the innocent suffer, economically, with the guilty.

"When the miners refused to be deflated at the end of the war a great cry went up that the union was not patriotic and that it was inimical to the best interests of the country. Following this stand there was some reaction from the crowd that can see prosperity unless workers suffer a wage cut. Some industries were forced to increase wages, and it was finally demonstrated that greater production and more efficiency would not be had if costs down, but that more would be increased. Workers, with an adequate wage, were enabled to produce more in the same time."

SENATE WILL PROBE BIG BAKERY MERGER

Washington, Dec. 25.—The Senate Judiciary Committee has appointed a sub-committee to probe the bread trust. The committee will also investigate the charge that the Federal District Court at Baltimore dismissed a complaint against the Continental Baking Corporation when it was informed that the Federal Trade Commission was prosecuting a similar case against the Continental. It is now known that the commission dropped its case and so notified the Department of Justice a few hours before the case was placed before the Baltimore court. The government failed to ask the court with the fact that the complaint was dropped.

The investigation was proposed by Senator La Follette.

LEWIS RE-ELECTED

Indianapolis, Dec. 25.—Returns from locals in all sections of the county indicate that John L. Lewis, president; Thomas Kennedy, secretary-treasurer, and other officials of the United Mine Workers, have been re-elected by sweeping majorities.

Favorite Studies of Trade Unionists

New York, Dec. 25.—The Workers' Education Bureau, indorsed by the A. F. of L., reports that the following studies are favorites of organized workers:

Trade Unionism—The aim and functions of workers' organizations.

Economics—Problems which involve wages, prices, cost of living and profits.

History—Facts which indicate how institutions, nations, customs, etc., came into being.

Psychology—Facts which reveal how and why people behave as they do.

General Science—The basis of life and the explanation of natural forces.

Sociology—Political, legal and social movements; group living.

Art—Literature, drama and the creative works of man.

The bureau urges workers to form study groups and select any of the above or other subjects. The bureau will furnish outlines on application to its offices, 476 West Twenty-fourth street, New York.

LAWS ARE DISOBEYED; ANARCHY THREATENED

New York, Dec. 25.—Bribery, vote frauds and rum violations are factors that are bringing this country to the verge of anarchy, Fred B. Smith, chairman of the Citizens' Committee of One Thousand, said in opening the executive session of the committee's annual meeting in Washington on January 11.

Bribery in public life looms above all large in undermining the country's social structure, through creating disrespect for law, as does the "somewhat general flaunting" of the Eighteenth Amendment," Mr. Smith said.

The recent acquittal of Fall and Doheny, he asserted, has "had a terrible effect on the country and given the people the idea that if one sets up a big enough roll of money can go down to Washington and even buy a cabinet member."

Referring to the elections in Pennsylvania and Illinois, he said he had no evidence of fraud that could be laid before a jury, but felt that these cases "were open scandals."

STATE WAGE LAW OPPOSED BY LABOR

New York, Dec. 25.—A prevailing rate of wages law was opposed by trade unionists at a hearing held by the State Industrial Survey Commission. The workers declared that the law was both unenforceable and unconstitutional. Pointing out that in a case from Oklahoma a similar law had been declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court, the workers said they are satisfied with a pending act which defines the terms "prevailing rate" and "locality" which the Supreme Court had ruled were illegal, to be the basis of criminal action in case of violation of the law. They urged, however, that the criminal section be expunged in the pending act be stricken out and that an arbitration clause be included for the settlement of disputes.

"Power To Control Nation's Purse Yielded To Executive By House

Washington, Dec. 25.—When the House of Representatives created the committee on appropriations it surrendered its greatest power into the hands of a few men, declared Congressman Connally in a speech in the house.

This committee, together with the budget law, were passed under the "Coolidge" but the Texas democratic lawmaker insisted that the plan has weakened the house and exalted the executive and those whom he controls.

"Whenever you give one great committee the right to handle appropriations, you are giving it control of the purse, and when you give it control of the purse you give it a control almost at great as the control of the sword," Mr. Connally said. "It is the government of the United States.

"Not being content with abdicating most of the power we had in that regard, we passed the budget law. This was a confession that we either did not have the disposition toward economy or that we lacked the power of economy, which was evidence to the country that the Congress was willing to go back on all the records of the past and was willing to abdicate its power and trust to the executive departments and give back to the executive control of the purse, wrung from kings by blood and battle.

"The house should have a committee on the budget. The present system operates as a confession that the Congress of the United States, whose only real power lies in the fact that it has control of the purse, is incapable of exercising that control, but has to have a budget bureau to stand over us with a club to say when and how the Congress shall appropriate money.

"Who legislates? The departments. We have an alien property bill coming up here tomorrow or the next day. I do not know who wrote the bill, but the bill last year was written by the treasury department. It is sent down here and it goes through the committee and it comes out of the committee as a committee bill. That sort of thing happens with the committee on foreign affairs, of which I am a member.

"We are called together when the state department wants us to do something. When is the committee on the judiciary called together—and I am not making any criticism of any particular committee. It is generally when the department of justice has something that it wants to put over. That is our system.

"It is a system that we ourselves have created that is destroying the power and the influence of the house. The senate, jealous of its power, grows new and then to stand up and defy the executive. It dares to stand there and retain the full freedom of its right to debate."

MONOTONY AND LABOR

Machinery and strict organization have no room for initiative effort, no outlet for temperamental tendencies. The worker is merely part of a prescribed plan. He must do just this, or just that; any deviation from his allotted routine spells the whole scheme and is disconcerted.

Under such conditions monotony is unavoidable. The worker makes nothing himself; he contributes an infinitesimal fraction of a long process, the end of which is a manufactured article.

Pride in his handiwork there can be none. He can derive no artistic pleasure from it, no creative satisfaction, for it affords him no opportunity of self-expression.—The Australian Worker.

CHAS. J. LAMMERT DEAD

Lafayette, Ind., Dec. 25.—Charles J. Lammert, general secretary-treasurer of the Brotherhood of Painters and Decorators, died here after an illness of more than one year. The funeral was held at his home in St. Louis, Mo.

JOHN FAHY PASSES ON

Columbus, Ohio, Dec. 25.—John Fahy, one of the founders of the United Mine Workers of America, died suddenly in this city. He was 62 years old. He was president of District No. 9, and later served as statistician for the International organization.

Dunkirk, N. Y., Dec. 25.—Wm. L. Phillips, general vice president of the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths, died in this city. He was a member of that union for nearly 40 years.

LEATHER WORKERS ACTIVE

Philadelphia, Dec. 25.—Leather workers in the glazed kid shops of this city are joining the United Leather Workers' International Union. They have a 100 per cent organization in several plants and are making gains in other local shops and also in Camden, N. J., across the Delaware River. With an increase in the number of hides tanned through organization in the finishing department, they will extend their activities.

BRITISH UNIONISTS FACE HARD CONTEST

London, England, Dec. 25.—Following a determined resistance against the miners' lockout, trade unionists face a legislative onslaught against trade union and labor rights.

The Conservative government, headed by Premier Baldwin, is backed by large employing interests that constitute the Federation of British Industries. These employers declare that "organized labor must realize that industry may adjust itself to the new post-war conditions."

"There never was a bigger delusion that the view of our opponents that the industrial struggles of the past year have placed the workers in such a position that reaction may safely go ahead with its political attacks," says the Daily Herald, owned by organized labor.

"It must be made clear that the workers of Britain will not submit to any curtailment of their right to strike, either on their own behalf or in sympathetic support of other industries and that they will not tolerate any new interference with the power to conduct their trade unions of or their members."

With the work day of the miners reduced to seven hours and the coal owners favor "peace in industry."

ROADS' REPAIR BILLS COULD BE REDUCED

Washington, Dec. 25.—Railroads continue to have rolling stock repaired by private concerns at a greater cost than in their own shops, according to the annual report of the Interstate Commerce Commission. These private companies are often interlocked with the railroads.

In one case cited by the commission, repairs to 177 locomotives in outside contract shops cost $1,837,000 in excess of what it would cost the carrier to repair the equipment in its own shops. This is an average excess of $10,350 per locomotive.

BINDERY WOMEN GAIN

Chicago, Dec. 25.—A wage increase of $2 a week has been secured by the Bindery Women's Union, affiliated to the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders. The new wages range from $25 to $30.50 for a 44-hour week.

COURTEOUS LAWMAKERS

(House proceedings. From Congressional Record, Dec. 16.)

The Chairman: "Will the gentleman from Texas please be in order."

Mr. Connally of Texas: "The gentleman from Texas is in order. The gentleman from Iowa has yielded to me."

The Chairman: "The Chair was making a statement."

Mr. Connally of Texas: "I beg the Chair's pardon. If the Chair will speak loud enough for the rest of us to hear him, we might observe a little more deference to the Chair. I was unaware that the Chair had interrupted."

The Chairman: "The Chair was not interrupting. The Chairman was calling the attention of the members of the House to the request of the gentleman from Iowa that he be not interrupted."

Mr. Connally of Texas: "I thank the Chair for his forbearance."

The Chairman: "It is perfectly all right with the Chair if gentlemen from Iowa desire to yield, but he addressed the Chair at the opening of his statement and said he would not like to be interrupted until he completed his statement. The Chair is trying to observe the rights of the gentleman from Iowa."

Mr. Connally of Texas: "I supposed that the gentleman from Iowa, after he started his speech, was in possession of all of his mental ability and able to take care of himself, and did not require the guardianship of the Chairman of the committee to prevent other gentlemen from interrupting him. I took it that he was a free, moral and intellectual agent, able to take care of himself."

OIL LEASES OUTLAWED BY FEDERAL CIVIL COURTS

Washington, Dec. 25.—From a legal standpoint the acquittal of Edward Doheny and former Secretary of the Interior Fall on criminal charges in connection with the Elk Hills oil lease, has no connection with civil proceedings against the oil leases.

The criminal charge revolved around Doheny's payment of $100,000 to Fall. The defendants claimed it was a loan. The government insisted that it was a bribe, but failed to connect the money with the oil lease.

Both the Elk Hills oil lease in California (Doheny) and the Teapot Dome oil lease in Wyoming (Sinclair) have been declared illegal by federal courts. Both cases are now before the United States Supreme Court on appeal.

The Federal District Court at Los Angeles set aside the Elk Hills lease, but Federal District Judge Kennedy at Cheyenne took an opposite course with Teapot Dome. The Kennedy decision was reversed by the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals. The opinion was rendered by Judge Kenyon, former United States Senator from Iowa, who scored the parties involved.

He pointed out that a dummy corporation, known as the Continental Trading Company was formed in Canada in 1921. Its profits in the re-sale of oil was invested in United States Liberty bonds. Some of these bonds, with an aggregate value of hundreds of thousands of dollars, were given by Dr. Everhart, son-in-law of former Secretary of the Interior Fall, and who assured banks that he was the son-in-law of Fall.

Everhart was placed upon the stand but refused to answer questions on the ground of self-incrimination. His claimed privilege was sustained by Judge Kennedy.

Other parties directly interested in the suit refused to answer questions. Judge Kenyon made this comment:

"Why is silence the answer of a former cabinet official to the charge of corruption? Why is silence the answer of Mr. Sinclair, a man of large business affairs, to the charge of bribing an official of his government? Why is the plea of self-incrimination—one not resorted to by honest men—the refuge of Fall's son-in-law, Everhart? When with honest motives and purposes do not remain silent when their honor is assailed.

"Is a court compelled to close its eyes to these circumstances? Is it to assist by nice technicalities and legal blindness a transaction such as the government charges took place, and such breach of trust as the evidence in this case points unerringly to, if not to absolute criminality.

"Our conclusion is that the government has sustained its claim that the lease and contract were procured by fraud and corruption, and that they should be cancelled."

SCOTT NEARING'S HISTORY

(From the Seamen's Journal.)

Professor Scott Nearing is a prolific writer, no less than a really lecturer. His latest book purports to be a history of the recent general strike in Great Britain.

The brief reference made to seamen in this 186-page history is a casual illusion to the "rebel sailors' strike" in Australia. Professor Nearing made various additional discoveries about the general strike since he wrote his book. In the course of a recent address at San Francisco the professor bitterly assailed Havelock Wilson, president of the British Seamen's Union, because the latter had not only refused to lead the seamen into the general strike, but used the capitalists' weapon, the injunction, against those who sought to stampede the seamen into the strike.

Professor Nearing is one of those impatient folk who would rather be radical than right. If the truth and the facts do not fit into his radical conception of things, then the truth is murdered and facts distorted.

It is true Havelock Wilson refused to lead the seamen into the disastrous general strike. But it is also true—and this truth Mr. Nearing has conveniently ignored—that Wilson and his oral tirades—that the British seamen took a strike vote and by an overwhelming majority, declared against participation in that contest.

The fact that Havelock Wilson's courageous attitude (most unpopular in certain quarters) was unanimously approved by the annual meeting of the British Seamen's Union is not mentioned by Mr. Nearing.

If Scott Nearing's comment on the British general strike is as misleading in respect to other groups of workers, then we may well pray to be saved from this self-styled friend.